THE DRAMATIC USE OF HOBBES'S POLITICAL IDEAS

A CHAPTER FROM

POLITICAL THEMES IN RESTORATION TRAGEDY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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LOUIS TEETER

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SUMMARY

Political Themes in Restoration Tragedy is an examination of the political ideas and situations in the drama from 1660 to 1688 in the light of their sources in political theory and earlier dramatic practice and of their theatrical value as characterizing or narrative devices. The dissertation is not confined to those plays or passages which seem to be actually polemical, but considers all those plays whose plots involve state affairs.

The first chapter deals with the background of critical theory as this affected the expression of political ideas. Although the dramatists paid lip service to the doctrine of decorum the necessity of creating admiration for the hero led them to violate it in practice. Chapters 2-5 trace the ancestry of stock political types such as the tyrant and the rebel back to their Elizabethan progenitors and emphasize the similarity in treatment. Chapter 6 shows how the political maxims which the Elizabethan dramatists gave to their "Machiavellians" were also voiced by the rebels and usurpers of the Restoration stage. There were, however, certain modifications. Otway in *Venice Preserved* uses a strain of thought traditionally characteristic of villains to heighten the cynical nobility of Pierre. Chapter 8 points out the important differences between the Elizabethan theory of divine right, which was a right *ex officio*, and the Stuart doctrine of *de jure* right. It was the Elizabethan form as conventionalized in the drama which was used by the Restoration playwrights and some of the most extravagant claims for regal independence (e. g. that the king is above the law) continue to be voiced only by tyrants although the ideas are very similar to the principles of Stuart absolutism. Hobbes's absolutism was recognized by his contemporaries as being incompatible with orthodox theory and his ideas were merely used to refurbish the conventional Machiavellian doctrines. This chapter, slightly condensed and modified, is given in the accompanying article.

The final chapter considers those plays written at the time of the Popish Plot (1679-83) which were avowedly partisan and political. The dramatists, inexperienced in writing thesis plays, attempted to make conventional stage characters and situations fit actual contemporary events. They had but little success. The great exception was Otway, who in *Venice Preserved* used traditional themes in a novel manner to attack the pretensions of the House of Commons.

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THE DRAMATIC USE OF HOBBES'S POLITICAL IDEAS

By Louis Teeter

The influence of the writing of Thomas Hobbes on the philosophical "climate" of the Restoration courtier and wit has been frequently analysed and emphasized. Taine wrote of them that Hobbes

érigeait leurs moeurs en théorie, donnait le manuel de leur conduite, et rédigeait d'avance les axiomes qu'ils allaient traduire en actions.[1]

The literary historians of the period have agreed in this appraisal and indicated the indebtedness of contemporary poets and playwrights.[2]

That this influence included his political ideas as well as his psychology has been generally assumed as axiomatic. Was not Hobbes the greatest theorist of monarchial absolutism of his time? and were not the poets and dramatists dominated by a Stuart court? Courthope, for example, speaking of Hobbes's political thought, writes that

A theory so favorable to the principles of the Restoration was, of course, promoted by all the social powers of the age.[3]

An assumption of such an influence has been frequently made by students of Dryden. Professor Bredvold in a discussion of that poet's use of Hobbesian doctrines remarks parenthetically:

In political thought, for instance, the monarchical absolutism of Hobbes is also the doctrine of Dryden's stage creatures, and must have been particularly grateful to the ears of the court audience for which Dryden wrote.[4]

[1] *Histoire de la Litterature Anglaise,* 10th ed., Paris, 1899, 3. 34.

[2] See in particular: Leslie Stephens, *Hobbes,* pp. 67-69; R. G. Ham, *Otway and Lee,* New Haven, 1931, pp. 46-49; J. Prinz, *John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester,* Leipzig, 1927, pp. 16-18; W. J. Courthope, *History of English Poetry,* London, 1903, 3. 459.

[3] Courthope 3. 459.

[4] *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden,* Ann Arbor, 1934, p. 66. This statement is reprinted from an article in *MP* 25 (May, 1928). It is significant that when Professor Bredvold came to an analysis of Dryden's political thought he decided that "it is less easy to find characteristic Hobbesian political theory in his drama." *Milieu,* p. 135.

Another student of Dryden's political thought finds many of Hobbes's ideas in his plays, and agrees with Mark Van Doren that his distrust of the crowd was due to the teaching of the *Leviathan*.[5]

Yet a careful examination of Hobbes's characteristic contributions to political theory and the attitude of his contemporaries towards them gives little support to the belief that an expression of them in the drama would have been "welcome to the court." His absolutism was derived from premises that were acceptable to no one and dependent upon conditions which were shocking to all believers in divine right. The orthodox royalists of his time were quite aware of this incompatibility and never tired of denouncing the danger of his theories. The first part of this article will be devoted to justifying these statements and discussing certain passages in the plays which seem to represent the actual opinions of the dramatists. In no case, I believe, will *typical* Hobbesian doctrines be found in the mouths of such characters as can be considered as speaking for the dramatist himself.

That is not to say, however, that Hobbes had no influence in this field. The drama is a narrative art in which many opinions not sanctioned by the author must be expounded. A drama concerned as was Restoration tragedy with state affairs must give to its tyrants, usurpers, and rebels political principles of a plausible and characteristic nature. If these principles can have the added piquancy of novelty so much the better, and if Hobbes were anathema to the royalists he might very well be a political guide to stage villains. It is to an investigation of this possible relationship that the concluding section of this article will be devoted.

What Hobbes actually said is perhaps most clearly interpreted against the background of his life.[6] He was prematurely born in 1588, his mother having been frightened by tales of the Spanish Armada. As he later wrote, Fear and he were twins, and, one may add, his brother visited him frequently throughout his life. In his first attempt at philosophy he formulated

[5] Merritt Y. Hughes, "Dryden as Statist," *PQ* 6 (1927). 339-40. The reference to Van Doren is to *The Poetry of John Dryden*, Cambridge, 1931, p. 17.

[6] I am not, of course attempting a complete analysis of Hobbes's philosophy. For a full discussion John Laird's *Hobbes*, London, 1934, is excellent.

a defense of absolutism for which he feared the Long Parliament would never forgive him, and he decided to shift for himself.[7] He fled to Paris, where he was soon at home in scientific circles. When the Prince of Wales arrived from England Hobbes was appointed his tutor in mathematics, and *only* mathematics, for he had already acquired his reputation for atheism.

It was during this period that he wrote the *Leviathan,* the most finished statement of his political theory, and had it printed in London in 1651. After the Restoration he was accused of having written it in order to facilitate his return to England, and Clarendon said that Hobbes had told him apropos of the book that " the truth is I have a mind to go home." [8] Whether this accusation was true or not, Hobbes did boast in 1656 that his doctrine had " framed the minds of a thousand gentlemen to a conscientious obedience to present government, which otherwise would have wavered in that point." [9] This was certainly not a claim calculated to endear his doctrines to the cavalier emigrés.

As was natural, Hobbes, that aged twin of Fear, viewed the Restoration with a certain anxiety. He was, however, received kindly by Charles and taken under the protection of a monarch who was as willing to sacrifice his family's political dogmas to a " bear-baiting " as his own dignity to a jest. From the shelter of the court, Hobbes became the patron saint of the Restoration rakes, whose commonplace books were full of extracts from his writings. His political ideas were, however, anathema to all parties. This will hardly seem astonishing if they are examined with care.

It is important to realize that the dominant emotion behind Hobbes's political thought was fear; the goal to which he was willing to sacrifice everything was security. And by the time he came to formulating his theory the Stuart doctrine of divine right was obviously unsuited for the comfort of a " diffi-

[7] J. Aubrey, *Brief Lives,* ed. Clark, 1.334. The *Elements of Law* circulated in manuscript in 1640 although not published until 1651.

[8] *A brief view and survey of the dangerous and pernicious errors to church and state in Mr. Hobbes's Leviathan,* 2nd imp., Oxford, 1676, p. 317.

[9] Hobbes, *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes,* ed. Molesworth, 7.336. All subsequent references will be to this edition.

dent" man. It was a theory that demanded the sacrifice of property and even life itself from the loyal; not in such divinity could Hobbes find the protection he sought. Hardly a religious man, he attempted rather to build his commonwealth solidly on the self-interest of the individual. If it could be shown that enlightened self-interest demanded absolute obedience, he would be striking at the root of most sedition and social unrest. The origin of government he found then in the selfish desire of man to escape from the insupportable war of the state of nature. Before, or without government,[10] man lived in "continual feare, and danger of violent death," for men, complete egotists and with a right to all that they could obtain, were driven by the passions of competition, diffidence, and glory to a condition of constant warfare against each other. Even the strongest could find himself caught at a fatal disadvantage by the weakest. It was thus to the advantage of everyone to escape from this condition and secure some common power capable of enforcing obedience and securing protection.

Such power could be secured only by uniting the separate strengths of the individuals, the natural right of each

> to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life.[11]

This donation of power was secured by contract.

> The only way to erect such a common power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another . . . is to confere all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person: and every one to own, and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so beareth their person, shall act, or cause to be acted, in those things which concern the common peace and safetie; and will therein to submit their wills, every one to his will, and their judgements, to his judgement. This is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man,

[10] Whether Hobbes conceived of the state of nature analytically or historically need not here concern us.

[11] *Works* 3. 116.

I authorize and give up my right of governing myselfe, to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorise all his actions in like manner. This done, the multitude so united in one person, is called a Commonwealth, in Latin *Civitas*. This is the generation of that great Leviathan, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that mortal god, to which we owe under the immortal God, our peace and defence.[12]

Now the contract theory had been historically the doctrine of those who desired to limit the sovereign, and Hobbes, in making it the basis of complete absolutism, was attempting to turn the rebels' own weapons against them. The particular novelty of his approach was not so much the assumption that the power given was irrevocable (this was the "donation" conception of contract) as that the contract was not between the people and the sovereign, but between the people themselves. The sovereign was thus not a party to the agreement at all and so could not be held under any circumstances to have broken it.

Hobbes at different times gave two accounts of the sovereign's source of power, both of which had reverberations in contemporary drama. He held at one time that rights could not really be given and that the sovereign's power was simply his "natural right" to everything which he possessed as a human being, but which his subjects had given up by contract.[13] The king was, in relation to his subjects, in a state of nature. Hobbes's final conclusion on the subject, however, was that given in the quotation above. The king possessed by contract the sum total of individual powers, which he exercized for his subjects. There could logically, then, be no complaint against him, as the malcontent would be really protesting against his own actions.[14]

The nature of sovereignty so evolved is absolute. The sovereign, being no party to the contract, can under no circumstances be considered as having broken it; there is no appeal for a would-be rebel. Even the most tyrannous and depraved of actions must be accepted, for it is the sovereign who establishes by fiat the standard of justice and injustice. For, "where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law,

[12] *Ibid.* 3. 157-158. [13] *Ibid.* 4. 88, 129; 2. 68 ff. [14] *Ibid.* 3. 163.

no injustice. Justice and injustice . . . are qualities, that relate to men in society, not in solitude." [15] The Sovereign possesses all those powers necessary for effective dominion: the judicial power; control of religious opinion, the right to carry on war and to reward and punish. Sovereignty is indivisible: there can be in a state but one sovereign power. If the king does not possess it, some other part of the government must. Hobbes admitted that a commonwealth could possess a Sovereignty identical in kind with that of a monarchy. The latter had certain advantages over other forms of government, but a democracy also possessed the essential sovereignty.

Now this doctrine of absolutism, complete as it was, was entirely unacceptable to that very party whose loyalty to the English monarchy was the most thorough-going. In part, of course, it was because the royalists suspected any contract theory, but their opposition went still farther. Hobbes, in evolving a system that would make for the security of men, had succeeded in sacrificing most of the things held sacred by the upholders of divine right. It may help to throw light on the incompatibility of these two systems of political thought if we consider Hobbes's as being also in a way a divine right theory, a Scotist divine right. The opposition between the relative importance of reason and justice on the one side and will on the other had long been a problem of theological importance. The followers of Aquinas laid emphasis on the justice of God's acts, the followers of Dun Scotus on His power. Thomistic theology said God acted in the way He did because that was the just and reasonable way; the Scotists insisted that this subordinated God to justice, and that the position must be reversed: what God did was just and reasonable because He so willed it. It was in terms of the orthodox Thomistic theology that the divine right of kings had been formulated. Obedience was owed to kings, not because by God's support they could compel it, but because their power was from God, and hence just.

Hobbes was a Scotist in theology. To him

> The right of nature, whereby God reigneth over men and punisheth those that break his laws, is to be derived, not from his creat-

[15] *Ibid.* 3.115.

ing them, as if he required obedience as of gratitude for his benefits; but from his irresistible power.[16]

It followed that the Leviathan, or "Mortall God" created by the needs of men, was divine in the essential attributes of God himself—His power.

For . . . he hath the use of so much power and strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is enabled to perform the wills of them all, to peace at home and mutual aid against their enemies abroad.[17]

The implications that prevent this Scotist divine right from being an aid and comfort to the descendants of Charles I and the loyalists driven from England by the armed force of the rebels are obvious. When applied to God the question as to whether power or justice be the more important is, in a way, merely academic, since it could be assumed He would always possess both. Not so, however, with Leviathan. That Mortal God, Charles the First, had lost his power most definitely at Naseby, and by losing it had lost his divinity. Without power he was no longer a god, for:

Though sovereignty, in the intention of them that make it, be immortal; yet is it in its own nature, not only subject to violent death, by foreign war; but also through the ignorance, and passions of men, it hath in it, from the very institution, many seeds of natural mortality, by intestine discord.[18]

The obvious corollary of such a position was that obedience was owed to whatever party could seize power; a conclusion that could never be admitted by a Stuart or a Tory. More than any other of Hobbes's ideas, at least in politics, this aroused the ire of the faithful. John Whitehall accuses him of providing the commonwealth with philosophical justification;[19] Clarendon says the Leviathan was a sly address to Cromwell;[20] and Wallis writes that

his great *Leviathan* . . . which, upon deserting his royal master in distress . . . was written in defence of Oliver's title, or whoever, by whatsoever means, can get to be upmost; placing the

[16] *Ibid.* 3.345. [17] *Ibid.* 3.158. [18] *Ibid.* 3.208.

[19] *Leviathan found out* (1679). Quoted by J. A. Thomas, "Some contemporary critics of Thomas Hobbes," *Economica,* 9 (1929). 188.

[20] *Brief View,* p. 317.

whole right of government merely in strength, and absolving all his Majesty's subjects from their allegiance, whenever he is not in a present capacity to force obedience.[21]

In 1669 a certain David Scargill made a public recantation at Cambridge in which he admitted that he had

lately vented and publicly asserted in the said university, diverse wicked, blasphemous and atheistical positions, (particularly, that all right of dominion is founded only in power: that if the devil be omnipotent he ought to be obeyed; that all moral righteousness is founded in the positive law of the civil magistrate only: . . .) professing, that I gloried to be an Hobbist and an atheist.

I do disclaim, renounce, detest and abhor . . . :

1. That all right of dominion is founded only in power.
2. That all moral righteousness is founded only in the law of the civil magistrates.[22]

Anyone holding such beliefs, Scargill admits, would comply in his own interest with the order of any invader or usurper.

Perhaps the best detailed record of the contemporary loyalist's attitude to Hobbes is found in the decree published by the University of Oxford on that day in 1683 when Russell was executed for treason. Coming from the great center of loyalism at a time when Charles was completely triumphant, it gives us an unusually detailed statement of what the royalists considered bad political theory. It is entitled:

The Judgement and Decree of the University of Oxford, passed in their Convocation, July 21, 1683, against certain pernicious books and damnable doctrines destructive to the sacred persons of princes, their state and government, and of all human society.[23]

There are twenty-seven propositions then presented, of which three are definitely referred to Hobbes and four, though given without reference, are undoubtedly his. Those of Hobbes are:

1. All civil authority is derived originally from the people.

7. Self-preservation is the fundamental law of nature, and supersedes the obligation of all others, whensoever, they stand in competition with it. (Hobbes, *de Civ. Leviathan.*)

[21] Quoted by Hobbes in "Considerations upon the Reputation, Loyalty, Manners and Religion of Thomas Hobbes," 1662, *Works* 4. 413.

[22] *Somers Collection of Tracts,* London, 1812, 7. 370-1.

[23] I quote from G. W. Cooke, *The History of Party,* London, 1836, 1. 346-355.

10. Possession and strength give a right to govern, and success in a cause or enterprise proclaims it to be lawful and just: to peruse it is to comply with the will of God, because it is to follow the conduct of his providence. (Hobbes. Owen's Sermon before the Regecides. Jan. 31, 1648. Baxter. Jenkin's Petition. October 1651.)

12. The foundation of civil authority, is this natural right; which is not given, but left to the supreme magistrate upon men's entering into societies, and not only a foreign invader, but a domestic rebel, puts himself again into a state of nature, to be proceeded against not as a subject but an enemy; and consequently acquires by his rebellion the same right over the life of his prince, as the prince for the most heinous crimes has over the life of his subjects.

13. Every man after his entering into a society retains a right of defending himself against force; and cannot transfer that right to the commonwealth, when he consents to that union whereby a commonwealth is made. And in case a great many men together have already resisted the commonwealth, for which every one of them expected death, they have liberty then to join together to assist and defend one another; their bearing of arms, subsequent to the first breach of their duty, though it be to maintain what they have done, is no new unjust act; and if it be only to defend their persons it is not unjust at all.

14. An oath superadds no obligation to a pact and a pact obliges no further than it is credited: and consequently if a prince gives any indication that he does not believe the promises of fealty and allegiance made by any of his subjects, they are thereby freed from their subjection, and notwithstanding their pacts and oaths, may lawfully rebel against, and destroy their sovereign. (Hobbes, *de Cive Leviathan.*)

Having presented their manifesto to the king, the university burned the works of Hobbes along with those of the notorious Bellarmine and Buchanan.

I have given these Hobbesian extracts, partly because they contain those doctrines which most enraged his loyal contemporaries and which we shall find reflected in the drama and partly because it seems necessary to make it quite clear that typically Hobbesian political doctrines could not have been used sympathetically by a Restoration dramatist in the hope of pleasing the court. If the "absolutism of Hobbes is also the doctrine of Dryden's stage creatures," then according to contemporary opinion they were a seditious crew indeed. As a matter of fact, no king who is not a tyrant ever claims the

sovereignty of Hobbes or demands obedience in the terms of the *Leviathan*. Hobbes had his contemporary triumphs, but they were not through serving as a political guide to loyal dramatists.

It might be here objected that we have contemporary evidence of Dryden at least having made use of Hobbes. John Aubrey in the notes he collected for a life of Hobbes jots down: "Mr. John Dryden, Poet Laureat, is his great admirer, and oftentimes makes use of his doctrine in his plays—from Mr. Dryden himself." [24] It will be noticed, however, that Aubrey does not specify that the doctrine was political; it seems likely, therefore, that Dryden was referring to ethical and psychological ideas, for example, the dilemma of free-will and necessity, the frequent use of which in his plays has been pointed out by Professor Bredvold.[25] The other reference to the poet's intellectual debt, however, is more precise. Professor Bredvold has called attention to Richard Leigh's accusation in *The Censure of the Rota* (1676) that Dryden in *The Conquest of Granada* had secured "the Reason and Politicall Ornaments from Mr. Hobs." [26] Leigh's poem, however, was a satirical attack on Dryden, and if Hobbes was made the damatist's political god-father it was because Hobbes was politically anathema to all right-thinking people. Dryden could hardly have welcomed the charge and could with justice have denied it if it meant that he agreed with the principles of the *Leviathan*.

Like all generalizations this one must be controlled by its exceptions. Thus there is a passage in Dryden's *Indian Emperor* which I am inclined to believe is indebted to Hobbes. Alibech has pointed out to the loyal Guyomar that the besieged people are starving to death and suggested that the country would actually be much better off if the Spaniards were admitted to the town. It is really the duty of anyone with his country's good at heart to betray Montezuma to the Spaniards. Guyomar is outraged.

> Take heed, fair maid, how monarchs you accuse:
> Those reasons none but impious rebels use:
> Those who to empire by dark paths aspire,

[24] *Brief Lives* 1. 372. [25] Bredvold, p. 66. [26] Bredvold, p. 118.

> Still plead a call to what they most desire;
> *But kings by free consent their kingdoms take,*
> Strict as those sacred ties which nuptials make;
> And whate'er faults in princes time reveal,
> None can be judge where can be no appeal.[27]

The line italicized represents, I believe, the sole favorable reference in the drama to the contract theory. It is by no means characteristically Hobbesian and one may doubt if that philosopher would have appreciated the marital analogy, even for the sake of a rhyme. The insistence that there can be no appeal from the contract is, of course, as old as the "translation" theory. The only reason for considering that Hobbes may have been in Dryden's mind is the neat way in which the loyalist adopts the social theory and urges it against the utilitarian position taken by Alibech. The actual form in which he expresses it is not Hobbesian, but the inspiration to use what was traditionally a revolutionary argument as an attack on revolution was perhaps derived from Hobbes.

An amusing example of a distorted use of Hobbes occurs in Lord Orrery's *Tryphon*. Tryphon has killed his king and usurped his throne. He justifies himself to the loyal subject Nicanor by explaining that the king had first determined to kill him, and that self-preservation, nature's dictate, not ambition, had driven him to the crime of regicide. Nicanor, however, returns the argument against him.

> Ah, Sir, though this had been the state of things,
> Yet subjects, Sir, should die to save their Kings . . .
> Nature, whose Dictates in defense you bring,
> Ties subjects by their Deaths to save their King:
> Nature is Reason, Sir, and that does show
> More to our Kings then to ourselves we owe,
> For in a subjects Death but one does fall,
> But a King's life contains the Life of all.[28]

Tryphon's defense might well have been taken direct from the *Leviathan* where Hobbes had pointed out that

> A covenant not to defend myself from force, by force, is always void. For, as I have showed before, no man can tansfer, or lay

[27] *The Indian Emperor* 4.2 (*Works*, ed. Scott and Saintesbury, 2.377). All further reference to Dryden's plays will be to this edition.

[28] *Tryphon* 1.1 (*Two New Tragedies*, London, 1672), pp. 4-5.

down his right to save himself from death, wounds, and imprisonment, the avoiding whereof is the only end of laying down any right: and therefore the promise of not resisting force, in no covenant transferreth any right; nor is obliging. For though a man may covenant thus, unless I do so, or so, kill me; he cannot covenant thus, unless I do so, or so, I will not resist you when you come to kill me.[29]

Even those in the audience who had not read Hobbes were probably aware of his teaching in this matter since the royalists consistently pointed out its heterodoxy.[30]

More unusual is Orrery's attempt to defend passive resistence in Hobbesian terms; yet that he was so doing seems clear. The justification of complete obedience to a sovereign by an appeal to the laws of nature was foreign to the drama and more typical of Hobbes than of any other writer. The scene itself indicates the genesis of Orrery's innovation. The dramatist has had Tryphon, a conventional usurper, justify himself by an appeal to the law of self-preservation, a doctrine particularly associated with the teaching of Hobbes. Thus with Hobbes's heterodoxy in his mind it probably occurred to Orrery that it would be ingenious to have his loyal subject damn the usurper out of his own mouth. His perversion of the *Leviathan* is indeed clever. The laws of nature, that is reason, teach us to do everything to preserve our lives (so far, Hobbes), but the king's life is ours (Hobbes had said that the multitude was united in the person of the king),[31] so we must, reason shows, preserve his at the expense of our own. It is quite possible that the famous frontispiece to the *Leviathan* picturing that mortal god as a giant made up of innumerable little men may have contributed to this distortion of the book's thesis. In any case, Orrery's dramatic exposition may well have impressed by its specious sophistry a contemporary audience which knew enough of Hobbes to recognize his first law of nature.

With the exception of such garbled passages as those I have indicated, the use of Hobbes by politically orthodox characters in the drama was confined to a few ideas which were the

[29] *Works* 3. 127.
[30] Cf. propositions 7, 12, 13, and 14 of the Oxford decree.
[31] *Works* 3. 158.

common possession of innumerable political philosophers. The frequent references in Dryden to the danger of any temporal claims by the priesthood, for example, can hardly be referred to any specific source; any monarchist was committed to a belief in the subordination of the clergy to the secular power. Sometimes, it is true, the phrasing seems an echo of Hobbes. The outburst of Cortez in *The Indian Emperor* against the priests:

> And you
> Who saucily, teach monarchs to obey,
> And the wide world in narrow cloisters sway;
> *Set up by Kings as humble aids of power,*
> *You that which bred you,* viper-like, devour.
> You enemies of crowns.[32]

may have been influenced in the lines I have italicized by the twelfth chapter of the *Leviathan,* wherein Hobbes says that religion has been cultivated by those who wished to teach subjects obedience to the state.[33] The idea was not original with Hobbes, of course. To go no further, Machiavelli had praised Numa Pompilius for inventing the Roman religion and using it for the advantage of the state.[34] But in the drama the idea had been characteristically expressed by Machiavellian "atheists." That Dryden should have given it to a loyal character is perhaps indicative of a less traditional source.

There is a long, obviously polemical passage in *The Conquest of Granada* which has been frequently cited as an example of Hobbes's influence. Yet an analysis of the ideas expressed will show, I believe, that it is almost completely royalist commonplace, and no more indebted to Hobbes than to a dozen other writers. The passage, which is but distantly related to the actual events in the play, is as follows:

> *Boabdelin*
> See what the many-headed beast demands.—
> Cursed is that king, whose honour's in their hands.
> In senates, either they too slowly grant,
> Or saucily refuse to aid my want;

[32] *The Indian Emperor* 5.2 (*Works* 2.400).
[33] *Works* 3.98-99.
[34] *Discourses,* Bk 1, Ch. 11 (*Works,* ed. Detmold, 2.127-28).

And, when their thrift has ruined me in war,
They call their insolence my want of care.

Abenamar

Cursed be their leaders, who that rage foment,
And veil, with public good, their discontent:
They keep the people's purses in their hands,
And hector kings to grant their wild demands;
But to each lure, a court throws out, descend,
And prey on those they promised to defend.

Zulema

Those kings, who to their wild demands consent,
Teach others the same way to discontent.
Freedom in subjects is not, nor can be;
But still, to please them, we must call them free.
Propriety, which they their idol make,
Or law, or law's interpreters, can shake.

Abenamar

The name of commonwealth is popular;
But there the people their own tyrants are.

Boabdelin

But kings who rule with limited command,
Have players' scepters put into their hand.
Power has no balance, one side still weighs down,
And either hoists the commonwealth or crown;
And those, who think to set the scales more right,
By various turnings but disturb the weight.

Abenamar

While people tug for freedom, kings for power,
Both sink beneath some foreign conqueror:
Then subjects find too late they were unjust,
And want that power of kings, they durst not trust.[35]

The passage may be analysed as follows:

The first speech of Boabdelin is not characteristically Hobbesian. It is scarcely emphatic enough as to the absolute necessity of the king controlling the finances,[36] and seems scarcely more than a petulant complaint that he is compelled to depend upon a niggardly senate.

Abenamar's speech is more an expression of Stuart cynicism than of serious theory.

Zulema's insistence that subjects have no liberty is perhaps

[35] *The Conquest of Granada,* Part II, 1.2 (*Works* 4.130.)
[36] *Works* 3.234-37.

from Hobbes,[37] but his suggestion that they should be called so is certainly not. This piece of policy might have stemmed from Clarendon, who had suggested that a clever king would permit the people to think themselves free.[38]

That property is really at the mercy of the sovereign was taught by Hobbes[39] and was a conception not usually emphasized by orthodox absolutists. It was a power denied the king by Bodin, whose *Republic* had been a university text-book since 1606, and its expression here may be due to the *Leviathan*.

That the people were tyrants in a commonwealth was a commonplace.[40]

Mr. Hughes finds in the last lines of the passage a reference to Hobbes's second law of nature, but just why is not clear.[41] The lines seem conventional enough in sense and phrasing.

Abandoning then the barren pursuit of any serious formulation of Hobbes's ideas, let us turn to that wider field in which rebels, usurpers, tyrants, and Machiavellians bedeck themselves with finery stolen from the *Leviathan* and rant Florentine à la Malmesbury. For, as I hope to show, Hobbes played in the drama much the same role as that played by Machiavelli before him.[42] Many of his most characteristic ideas were indeed closely related to opinions that had been expressed by stage villains from the time of Marlowe.

Hobbes's doctrine that dominion was founded on power, which the obscure Scargil penitently recanted, bears a specious resemblance to the Elizabethan usurper's conviction that nothing succeeds like success. When Photinus in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The False One* urges rebellion on the grounds that

> If we prosper,
> 'Twill be styl'd lawful, and we shall give laws
> To those that now command us.[43]

[37] But see *Works* 3.199, "Liberty of the subject consistent with the unlimited power of the sovereign."

[38] *A Brief View*, p. 71.

[39] *Works* 3.232-37.

[40] See Dunning, *History of Political Theories from Luther to Montesquieu*, New York, 1905, p. 258.

[41] "Dryden as Statist," p. 348. I presume he means the *third* law.

[42] John Eachard has his mouthpiece Timothy remark that the young men who have not read Machievelli consider Hobbes new. *Mr. Hobbes's State of Nature considered in a Dialogue between Philautus & Timothy* in *Dr. Eachard's Works*, 11th ed., London, 1705, p. 11.

[43] *The False One* 5.2 (*Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* ed. Waller and Glover, 3.359).

he was but anticipating the doctrine attributed to Hobbes in the tenth proposition of the Oxford decree: " success in a cause or enterprise proclaims it to be lawful and just." But to the Elizabethan mind, which did not carefully discriminate between *de facto* and *de jure* power,[44] the latent antithesis in this idea was not developed. It was not until the Restoration that it was unequivocably expounded as a political principle by the villainous, and the ingenuity with which it is used for dramatic effect is one of the clearest examples of the use of Hobbes's ideas.

The distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* sovereignty, between " Thomistic " and " Scotist " divine right, which was latent in the principle of Hobbes was theatrically used by Dryden in *The Indian Queen*. The Inca and his daughter have been captured and Zempoalla has vowed to sacrifice them to her gods. Traxalla, however, who has fallen in love with the princess, invokes the principle of divine right in an attempt to save her life. " Princes are sacred," he points out. Zempoalla counters with an expression of Hobbes's conception of regal divinity.

> True, whilst they are free;
> But power once lost, farewell their sanctity:
> 'Tis power to which the gods their worship owe,
> Which, uncontrouled makes all things just below.[45]

She goes even further: " Thou do'est the pleas of saucy rebels use. . . ." Now to find the divinity of kings to be an argument of " saucy rebels " is indeed an innovation in the drama and is attributable to the royalists' shocked interpretation of Hobbes's doctrine of dominion founded on power.

In Dryden and Lee's *The Duke of Guise* this principle was given a twist that would have pained the old enemy of faction, though he would have been forced to admit that the conclusion was a legitimate corollary of his position. I am referring to the passage in which the conspirators of the league decide that not they, but the king is a rebel. Says Bussy:

[44] When Convocation in 1606 compiled a series of canons on the nature of political authority they specifically insisted upon the legitimate authority of a successful usurpation—much to the disgust of James.

[45] *The Indian Queen* 3.1 (*Works* 2.253).

'Tis a plain case; the king's included in the punishment, in case he rebel against the people.[46]

Polin is unable to understand how the king can rebel, but the paradox is explained by the Curate of St. Eustace:

I'll make it out: Rebellion is an insurrection against the government; but they that have the power are actually the government; therefore, if the people have the power, the rebellion is in the king.

Bussy remarks that this is " a most convincing argument for faction " but the priest retorts:

> For arming, if you please, but not for faction;
> For still the faction is the fewest number:
> So what they call the lawful government,
> Is now the faction; for the most are ours.

Now if we were confining our investigations to strictly logical influences we would have to free Hobbes from the charge of serving the leaguers, for in the last speech the curate implies that they have not yet the power (since they are yet to arm), and bases their right on numerical superiority. Such a majority right is not Hobbesian, but is taken from the sixteenth-century monarchomachs, with which Dryden was familiar. We are, however, dealing with one of those mosaics of contradictory ideas so typical of Dryden's dramatic arguments. The Hobbesian influence is found in the curate's earlier point that the particular body of the state which has the actual power, i. e., the sovereignty of the *Leviathan,* is the real government. Hobbes had written:

that King whose power is limited, is not superior to him, or them that have the power to limit it; and he that is not superior, is not supreme; that is to say not sovereign. The sovereignty therefore was always in that assembly which had the right to limit him.[47]

It might be urged that Hobbes does not explicitly justify the rebellion of the powerful. But the implications of an idea originally controlled by the dominating purpose of the man who formulated it may, upon falling into different hands, be differently developed. Hobbes was, of all men who ever wrote,

[46] *The Duke of Guise* 1.1 (*Works* 7.25).
[47] *Works* 3.179.

the farthest from a desire to encourage rebellion on any grounds whatsoever. Yet, as we have seen, he was commonly accused of justifying successful rebellion. Similarly distorted, the implications concerning a rebellious king-without-power undoubtedly latent in the passage I have quoted could be used, as Dryden used them, to put his villains *au courant* with the latest developments in casuistical disloyalty.[48]

It is this doctrine, obscured by poetic and dramatic trimmings, which lies behind an exchange between Arcos, the Spanish Ambassador and Boabdelin in *The Conquest of Granada*. The ambassador has closed his attack on Boabdelin's title to the Moorish throne by pointing out:

> You have no right, except you force allow;
> And if yours then was just, so ours is now.

To which Boabdelin replied:

> 'Tis true, from force the noblest title springs;
> I therefore hold from that, which first made kings.[49]

Professor Bredvold, who has not taken into consideration the ambassador's lines, suggests that the king's speech is from Hobbes.[50] But Hobbes most notoriously had *not* made kingship the product of force but of contract. He had, it is true, recognized sovereignty by conquest,[51] but merely as one of the historical origins of the state. The idea had been more forcefully expressed by orthodox theorists, among others by Bodin [52] and King James himself.[53] The conception had not, however, found favorable expression in the drama, but had been taken over by the Machiavellian villain who identified conquest with usurpation. Machiavel in the prologue to *The Jew of Malta* first formulated the traditional handling of this theme when he said

> Many will talk of title to a crown:
> What right had Caesar to the empery?
> Might first made kings,

[48] This treatment occurs in several plays. Cf. *The Spanish Friar* 5.2 (*Works* 6.507) where Lorenzo says "the beaten party are rebels to the conquerors."

[49] *The Conquest of Granada,* Part I, 1.1 (*Works* 4.47).

[50] Bredvold, p. 135. Professor Bredvold recognizes that the idea is not sympathetically presented.

[51] *Works* 3.159.

[52] *Republic* 2.2.

[53] *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* in *Political Works,* ed. McIlwain, p. 55.

and in the subsequent drama only the politically wicked so expressed themselves.

In the light of this dramatic tradition we can correctly interpret Dryden's handling of the theme. Arcos (and it must be remembered that he does represent the legitimate claim, while Boabdelin is actually a usurper as he is accused) has denied to the Moorish king any ethical right to the throne and added ironically that even if he claims by power his title is weak. But Boabdelin pounces upon the word "force" and, giving it the conventionally orthodox implications as to the "origin" of his power, urges it as proof of the right of his claim. Arcos, however, has read Hobbes, and points out the inconsistency of his argument.

> Since then by force you prove your title true,
> Our's must be just, because we claim from you.

The Spaniard has ironically applied Hobbes to Machiavelli with devastating effectiveness.

Hobbes's doctrine of the purely civil origin of justice was one of the "atheistical positions." recanted by Scargil and damned by the Oxford decree. Not only was it ethically shocking, it was politically dangerous. The strength of the theory of divine right lay in its identification of obedience with moral standards that transcended the transitory, the expedient or the merely civil. The sovereign's right to be obeyed was unassailable precisely because it did rest upon the immutable foundation of divine justice. If there were no right beyond the will of the king, then he could claim no sanction beyond what he was actually in a position to impose. The doctrine of non-resistance, of course, insisted that no matter what crimes a monarch committed, rebellion was not justified; but this was not the same as saying that he could do no wrong.[54] The most exaggerated claims that are made for kingly power both in the Elizabethan and Restoration drama were made in terms that everyone would have known to be "destructive to the sacred persons of princes." This truth, so consistently ignored

[54] It is not, perhaps, too irrelevant to point out that this phrase is the product of Whig theory, and kings became incapable of sin, only when they became incapable of sovereign power. Cf. D. Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, Oxford, 1934, 2. 453.

by literary critics of the drama, has been succinctly phrased by one of the most trenchant historians of political theory.

> A theory of sovereignty in which law and right become one and in which no right exists except that of the Sovereign's creation, was held by no one in the sixteenth century. Such a view was impossible to anyone who held that right was divine. *It was wholly incompatible with the theory of the divine right of Kings.* Just so far as men came to believe in sovereignty to this extent, the right of the Sovereign lost its divinity. Historically it is those who lost faith in the divinity of right, and of Kings, who believed in the absolute right of the political sovereign.[55]

However politically unorthodox it might be, the conception had certain dramatic possibilities that the poets were quick to hit upon for their own uses. It was, of course, eminently suited for a tyrant's rants. Dryden, ever ready to make such innovations, used the idea as early as *Tyrannic Love,* where Maximin boasts:

> Our Gods are Gods, 'cause they have power and will;
> Who can do all things, can do nothing ill.
> Ill is rebellion 'gainst some higher power:
> The world may sin, but not its emperor.[56]

Probably the most extended exposition of this doctrine occurs in Crown's *Calisto.* Jupiter, who expresses the idea, is speaking both as God and king, which slightly confuses the matter, but his latter position is sufficiently emphasized.

> I cannot err, what e'er my actions be;
> There's no such thing as good or ill to me.
> No action is by nature good or ill;
> All things derive their natures from my will.
> If virtue from my will distinct could be,
> Virtue would be a power supreme to me.
> What no dependency on me will own,
> Makes me a Vassal and usurps my throne.
> If so I can revenge me in a thrice
> Turn all the balance, and make Virtue Vice.[57]

[55] J. W. Allen, *History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century,* London, 1928, p. 393. Italics mine.

[56] *Tyrannic Love* 5.1 (*Works* 3.456).

[57] *Calisto* 2.1 (*Works,* ed. Maidment and Logan, 1.264). Genest, who could scent "divine right" in astonishing places, considers this passage incredibly servile on the part of Crowne. *Some Account of the English Stage* 1.181.

If this passage be compared with a typically "Machiavellian" one from the anoymous *Nero* of 1624 it can be seen just how the Hobbesian doctrine gave a new turn to an old dramatic theme. Nero, who has just had Proculus killed, says

> This 'tis to be commander of the world.
> Let them extol weak pity that do need it,
> Let men cry to have law and justice done
> And tell their griefs to heaven that hears them not:
> Kings must upon the people's headless corses
> Walk to security and ease of mind.
> Why, what have we to do with th'airy names
> That old age and philosophers found out,
> Of justice and ne'er certain equity?
> The gods revenge themselves and so will we:
> *Where right is scand, authority's o'erthrown*;
> We have a high prerogative above it.
> Slaves may do what is right, we what we please:
> The people will repine and think it ill,
> But they must bear, and praise too, what we will.[58]

The two passages are similar in their emphasis on the danger to a king of a system of justice independent of his will. Nero, however, shifts inconsistently between two conceptions of justice. On the one hand he explicitly asserts his belief that justice is merely a fiction made up by wise men; on the other he seems to admit the existence of a moral standard, which is hostile to powerful rule and which kings must ignore. This wavering between the two conceptions was characteristic of pre-Restoration tyrants. But the tyrants of Dryden and Crowne have gone an important step further. They no longer either oppose themselves to morality, or deny it; instead, they create it. And this conception, entirely new to the stage,[59] would seem plausibly enough to stem from Hobbes.

The idea, frequently used as a sheer rhetorical heightening

[58] *Tragedy of Nero* 2.2, Mermaid ed. Italics mine. In the italicized line I have followed the 1624 quarto reading of "scand" instead of the Mermaid's "scant."

[59] There are passages in the earlier drama which come very close to this position. Thus in Fletcher's *The Bloody Brother* the tyrannous Rollo says

> "I sit above in power, where power is given,
> Is all the right suppos'd by Earth and Heaven."
> (*Works* 4.273)

But a closer examination of the whole passage shows it to be a conventional piece of "Machiavellianism."

of ruthless power, is sometimes employed for more subtle and paradoxical effects. Thus, Crowne uses it in a passage that will repay comparison with a scene in *Valentinian*. In Fletcher's play the tyrant, having violated Lucina, explains to her:

> Know I am above the faults I do.
> And those I do I am able to forgive too.[60]

In *Caligula* Crowne gives his tyrant the advantage of a knowledge of Hobbes's supposed identification of morality with the will of the sovereign. The result is a novel variation of an old theme that must have pleased his audience. Caligula tells the recalcitrant heroine:

> Madam, my time, nay more, my life you waste:
> Yes, Madam, now 'tis treason to be chaste.

The virtuous Julia is not moved by this frontal attack. " Sir, for the world I'd not my honour lose." But feminine virtue could have no sanctuary from a dramatist's conception of a " mortall God." Caligula overwhelms her.

> Oh! I'm the fountain whence all honour flows.
> Yes, Madam; sure you are not to be told . . .
> I can make virtue scorn'd and vice esteem'd,
> I can make hell ador'd, and Heav'n blasphemed,
> Success, dominion, and the longest sword,
> Make any creeds believ'd, or gods ador'd.[61]

Dryden has heightened the impression of Maximin's power in *Tyrannic Love* by an amusingly absurd combination of two of Hobbes's ideas. The emperor's daughter in a display of independence has insisted that her free-will at least is beyond her father's control. But Maximin tells her:

> I'll find that power o'er wills, which heaven ne'er found.
> Free will's a cheat in any'one but me;
> In all but kings 'tis willing slavery;
> An unseen fate which forces the desire;
> The will of puppets danced upon a wire.
> A monarch is
> The spirit of the world in every mind;
> He may match wolves to lambs, and make it kind.
> Mine is the business of your little fates;

[60] *Valentinian* 3.1 (*Works* 4.38). [61] *Caligula* 3.1 (*Works* 4.402).

> And though you war, like petty wrangling states,
> You're in my hand; and, when I bid you cease,
> You shall be crushed together into peace.[62]

The passage illustrates to perfection the clever way in which Dryden made use of any handy theory for dramatic effect. It is a weird mosaic of contradictory conceptions and unwarranted applications of ideas. To start with, Dryden is applying the Hobbesian denial of free-will, an idea of which he made frequent use in other ways, to an entirely irrelevant situation. Hobbes had given an explanation which seemed to make of free-will nothing but a cheat, for he had said that while a man was indeed free to do that which he wanted to do, his desires themselves were rigorously bound in a chain of causation. A man must desire to do that which he feels free to do. This compulsion applied to kings as much as to any one, of course, but Hobbes had expounded the traditional conception of the sovereign as the vital force in the state in such a form that Dryden was here enabled to make a telescoped application of two unrelated ideas. In the *Philosophical Rudiments* Hobbes had written that

> They who compare a city and its citizens with a man and his members almost all say, that he who hath the supreme power in the city is in relation to the whole city, such as the head is to the whole man. But it appears by what hath been already said, that he who is endued with such a power, whether it be a man or a court, hath a relation to the city, not as that of the head, but of the soul to the body. For it is the soul by which a man hath a will, that is, can either will or nill; so by him who hath the supreme power, and no otherwise, the city hath a will, and can either will or nill.[63]

and

> the chief ruler . . . whose will contains the will of each man.[64]

Now if the word " will " be twisted out of its purely political meaning and taken in a psychological sense the passage can be made to imply that it is only through the king that a subject has any will at all. Such a transition in thought would be facilitated by Hobbes's insistence that the actions of the

[62] *Tyrannic Love* 4.1 (*Works* 3.430).
[63] *Works* 2.89. [64] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

king are really the actions of the subject (by the terms of the social contract) even when the subject thinks he is willing otherwise. It was such a play upon ideas that Dryden probably had in mind when he penned Maximin's lines.

It may be that the doctrine attacked in the fourteenth proposition of the Oxford decree had some connection with the claims of characters like Almanzor and Montezuma, who admitted allegiance no longer than the king respected their interests. The idea is, however, an essentially commonplace one, though there is a passage in Settle's *Cambyses* which is more explicit than usual. The villain Prexaspes, whose word has been doubted by Cambyses, says

> Since he does distrust
> My faith and Loyalty, it were but just,
> That he should find me false who thinks me so.[65]

Whether Hobbes could be held responsible or not, it is probably true that the pit would have considered Prexaspes a "Hobbist."

The famous huffing scene between Almanzor and Boabdelin is heightened in dramatic interest, and certain obscurities in the king's position are cleared up when it is realized that Dryden is playing off two rival political theories against each other in the characters of the two men. Almanzor, who dwells —for the purposes of this scene, at least—in the Stoic's state of nature, is faced by a king who has read Hobbes, and their disagreement as to the source and validity of political coercion makes good theatre.

The exchange takes place after Almanzor, having given his aid to the weaker of the warring factions simply because it was the weaker, is condemned to death by Boabdelin. After paying his respects to his own heroic indifference to death, Almanzor at once propounds a fundamental problem in political science: On what grounds could the king claim a right to condemn a man who refused to accept the state's authority? Almanzor recognizes the existence of a state whose members are bound by its law: "Obeyed as Sovereign by thy subjects be," but explicitly denies that he himself is a member of it, or subject to its coercion. He himself is in the state of nature.

[65] *Cambyses*, London, 1672, 1.1.

> But whence hast thou the right to give me death?
> Obey'd as sovereign by thy subjects be,
> But know that I alone am king of me,
> I am as free as nature first made man,
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> When wild in wood the noble savage ran.

Boabdelin retorts ironically

> Since, then, no power above your own you know,
> Mankind should use you like a common foe;
> You should be hunted like a beast of prey:
> By your own law, I take your life away.

But Almanzor, as hero, has the last word.

> My laws are made but only for my sake;
> No king against himself a law can make.
> If thou pretend'st to be a prince like me,
> Blame not an act, that should your pattern be.
> I saw the opprest, and thought it did belong
> To a king's office to redress the wrong:
> I brought that succour which thou ought'st to bring,
> And so, in nature, am thy subjects' king.[66]

Almanzor's first speech is an expression of the traditional juristic state of nature. The original condition of mankind according to this conception was an idyllic state in which laws and government were unknown and each man was his own ruler. Government was an "unnatural" creation made necessary by man's fall from his original virtue. The Stoic ethics, with its fusion of the conception of self-sufficiency and the doctrine of following nature, implied that the thoroughly rational, that is to say, throughly "natural" man had no need of an "artificial government; he was outside of the legal and political relationships binding on his fallen brethren. This whole complex of ideas had been adopted by the Elizabethan dramatists and used for manifold dramatic purposes. Chapman in particular had used it in *Bussy D'Ambois* to heighten and justify the independence of his hero.[67] Bussy, in a speech

[66] *The Conquest of Granada*, Part 1, 1.1 (*Works* 4.43).

[67] I hope to consider elsewhere the strangely ignored question of Chapman's influence on the genesis of Almanzor.

much like Almanzor's, appeals to nature against the laws of the state.

> Since I am free,
> (Offending no just law), let no law make
> By any wrong it does, my life her slave:
> When I am wrong'd, and that law fails to right me,
> Let me be king myself (as man was made),
> And do a justice that exceeds the law. . . .
> Who to himself is law, no law doth need,
> Offends no law, and is a king indeed.[68]

The kings in the two plays both accept the state of nature as a norm, but arrive at sharply divergent conclusions as to its application. Henry says of Bussy that

> kings had never borne
> Such boundless empire over other men,
> Had all maintain'd the spirit and state of D'Ambois.[69]

Yet Boabdelin, taking Almanzor at his own valuation, insists: "By your own law, I take your life away."

What is the explanation of Boabdelin's retort? From what point of view could it be argued that the law of nature justified the civil authority in punishing criminals? The answer becomes clear when it is recognized that Boabdelin (a usurping Hobbist, let it be remembered) is translating Almanzor's Stoic state of nature into the Hobbesian form in which everyone had the right to kill when it was to his advantage. At one stage of his thought, as I have pointed out, Hobbes had said that the power of the king was simply his natural right as a man which he had not given up as had his subjects by contract. Judging by the twelfth proposition of the Oxford decree, this explanation impressed his contemporaries and may have been what Dryden had in mind when penning Boabdelin's lines.

The line

> Mankind should use you like a common foe,

however, indicates that the king is not merely referring to his

[68] *Bussy D'Ambois* 2.1. 194 ff.
[69] *Bussy D'Ambois* 3.2. 95 ff.

own right, but to the right of the whole organized state against a recalcitrant individual. Hobbes had recognized the possibility that some independent individuals might refuse to enter into the general contract and insist upon going their own lonely way like Almanzor. Hobbes had explained in the *Leviathan* just what position they occupied in respect to the state into whose formation they had not entered.

> Because the major part hath by consenting voices declared a sovereigne; he that dissented must now consent with the rest; that is, be contented to avow all the actions he shall do, or else justly be destroyed by the rest. . . . And whether he be of the congregation or not, and whether his consent be asked, or not, he must either submit to their decrees, or be left in the condition of war he was in before; wherein he might without injustice be destroyed by any man whatsoever.[70]

It was this strain of thought that lay behind the speech of Boabdelin and is so heroically and irrelevantly answered by Almanzor.

Hobbes's original contributions to the Polybian state of nature and his analysis of the fundamental passions that drive men probably never found expression in the drama at all as a political theme.[71] To the modern student of Hobbes the most characteristic element in his description of the state of nature is its insecurity. Even the strongest must fear the weakest who may at any time be able to overcome him by treachery. It was not this phase, however, that impressed his contemporaries, who turned rather to the passage in *De Cive* in which Hobbes had said that "Man is to Man an arrant Wolf." His cynical evaluation of human nature and his anti-primitivistic picture of man unprotected by organized government seems to have shocked everyone's most cherished illu-

[70] *Works* 3.162. Cf. proposition 12 of the Oxford decree: ". . . a domestic rebel, puts himself again into a state of nature, to be proceeded against . . . as an enemy."

[71] In his *Bellamira*, Sir Charles Sedley has Merryman, who is about to sleep with his friend's mistress, justify himself by saying:

> Besides, in matter of Women, we are all in the State of Nature, every man's hand against every man, whatever we pretend.
>
> (*Bellamira* 3.4. 112 ff.)

This libertine interpretation of the motive of competition is "Hobbesian" but hardly political.

sions.[72] The popular conception was that Hobbes had held up for admiration the "natural" man as gratuitiously cruel and treacherous. It is only by dipping into some of the contemporary attacks that one can come to appreciate what the audiences of Dryden and Lee would have recognized on the stage as a "Hobbist."

The most illuminating, and certainly the wittiest of these attacks was published by John Eachard in 1672. "*Mr. Hobbe's State of Nature considered in a Dialogue between Philautus & Timothy* presents Hobbes in the character of Philautus voicing those ideas generally accredited to him. When first accosted by Timothy, Philautus refuses to walk with him on the grounds that Timothy will undoubtedly take advantage of him in some unguarded moment and kick him. Such conduct is only what the intelligent man would expect from a member of the human race, for

> I must tell thee, that men naturally are all ravenous and currish, of a very snarling and biting nature; to be short, they are in themselves meer Wolves, Tygers and Centaurs.[73]

Later in their conversation Timothy explains ironically that after reading Hobbes's description of the state of nature he had looked about him expecting to find the whole world shouting "hang him with his own guts, give him a pound of melted lead for a julip to cool his pluck," and generally revelling in torture and cruelty.[74]

It is difficult to appraise just what the connection between such a common interpretation of Hobbes and the effect of such plays as *Tyrannic Love* and *Nero* might have been. These plays with their cruel tyrants and their scenes of torture and mutilation represented in part a return to Elizabethan models; yet to the audiences that beheld them they must have appeared as dramatic illustrations of Hobbes's doctrines. It may not be too far-fetched to see in the reappearance of this dramatic type a recognition on the part of the dramatists that the

[72] J. A. Thomas, "Some Contemporary Critics of Thomas Hobbes," *Economia* 9 (1929). 185-91, finds all parties united in indignation at Hobbes's conception of human nature.

[73] *Dr. Eachard's Works*, p. 5.

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

horror aroused by Hobbes offered them a fertile field in which to work and an opportunity to give the old an air of novelty. The possibility of such a connection is strengthened when we discover Settle, one of the most assiduous dramatists of the horror school, having one of his villains appeal to a state of nature much like that of Timothy. The career of Crimalhaz in *The Empress of Morocco* has been made up of regicide, murder and usurpation. He insists, however,

> This work, which we so roughly do begin,
> Zeal and Religion may perhaps call Sin.
> No; the more Barb'rous garb our Deeds assume,
> We nearer to our First perfection come,
> Since Nature first made Man wild, savage, strong,
> And his Blood hot, then when the world was young:
> If Infant-times such Rising valours bore,
> Why should not Riper Ages now do more.
> But whilst our Souls wax Tame, and Spirits Cold,
> We Only show th'unactive World grows Old.[75]

A primitivistic appeal against the artificial demands of religion and morality had, of course, characterized the Machiavellian villain since the time of Marlowe, but such villains had not explicitly appealed to a primitive state of ruthless savagery. Paradoxically enough, it had been the Stoic conception on which they had built.[76] Crimalhaz, who is unquestionably in the Machiavellian tradition, avoids this confusion and quite frankly justifies his treachery and cruelty by citing man's natural wildness and barbarism. It seems probable that Settle was making use of the popular misinterpretations of Hobbes's state of nature.

In conclusion then, we can insist that the influence of Hobbes's political ideas on the Restoration drama was, like Machiavelli's on the Elizabethan, almost completely theatrical. His principles were logically incompatible with the form of absolutism accepted by the court party and were recognized by them as being incompatible. But the very notoriety of his ideas made them valuable to the dramatists who wished to have their political villains up to date and echoes of the *Levia-*

[75] *The Empress of Morocco*, London, 1673, 3.2.

[76] The fundamental confusion of this strain of dramatic thought is particularly well illustrated in the anonymous *Selimus*, 1594, 1, lines 305 ff.

than are to be found in the speeches of many tyrants and usurpers. The situations and characters to whom his ideas were applied, however, were inherited from the Elizabethan drama and were not seriously modified by the Hobbesian influence; indeed many of the ideas accredited to Hobbes had been adumbrated by the conventional Machiavellian. The Elizabethan drama would certainly have been different had not Machiavelli been throughly misunderstood. So much can not be said for Hobbes in the Restoration period. The dramatic appetite had been already trained, and the fare to satisfy it was in all essentials already cooked. Yet certainly we can claim for Hobbes a piquant seasoning of the dishes. The analogy is not unhappy. In the plays his influence is pervasive, sharp and only too often intangible.

Baltimore

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The writer, Louis Teeter, was born December 27, 1902, in Chicago, Illinois. His secondary school education was secured at the Southern Illinois State Normal University in Carbondale, Illinois. He entered the University of Illinois in 1920 and received the Bachelor of Arts degree in June 1924. In 1927, after three years of journalistic work, he accepted a position as instructor of English in New York University, where he taught until 1933. In the fall of that year he entered the English department of The Johns Hopkins University and received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from that institution in June 1936.